SALMON FISHING

Synopsis of Film

1. The Seiners.
   Fleet of Salmon Boats Near Point Roberts, Washington.

2. Lowering the Nets from a Moving Boat.

3. Hauling the Purse Nets. Steam Power is Used to Draw the Nets.

4. Part of the $50,000,000 Worth of Salmon Caught Yearly in American Waters.

5. A Salmon Trap.
   40,000 Salmon, Filling Three Scows, Were Removed from this Single Trap.

6. Salmon Thrown Onto a Moving Endless Belt Which Carries Them into the Cannery.

THE SALMON INDUSTRY

ONE of the most prolific of fish, most agreeable to the taste, and most nutritious, is the salmon. There are many known varieties of salmon differing in appearance, size, and habits. A rough distinction is that between the Atlantic and the Pacific salmon. Each of these groups includes many species, particularly that of the Pacific Coast of North America. From Monterey in California to Northern Alaska, the many streams which empty into the Pacific Ocean are the breeding places of untold millions of these fish which annually ascend the rivers to spawn and thus to perpetuate their kind. The varieties include the chinock, of agreeable flavor and generally with red flesh; the sockeye, well-flavored and with bright red meat; the coho, inferior in color but of excellent flavor; the humpback, paler than the coho and of inferior flavor; and the chum, palest of all and least desirable as food. All of these are caught and canned and have an important part in the nation's food supply. The best grades of salmon are richer than meats in body-building materials and contain quite as much fat. They are digestible as steaks, contain no waste, when canned will keep indefinitely without spoiling, and cost less than one-third as much as meats and eggs.

The cheapness of salmon is due to their wonderful abundance and to the labor-saving machines by which they are packed. In 1913 the equivalent of 387,000,000 one-pound cans was the output of the Pacific coast canneries. This would supply every man, woman and child in the United States with about four pounds of canned salmon a year.

Canned salmon is particularly sanitary. The fish are delivered to the canneries immediately after they are caught. They are then washed and conveyed to a machine called an "iron chink," which cuts off the heads,

tails and fins, and dresses them at the rate of 3,000 an hour. These prepared fish are automatically carried to another machine which cuts them into pieces to fit the cans in which they are to be packed. No foreign matter enters these tins and cooking is done after the cans are sealed. The whole process is managed without the touch of the human hand.

One hundred million fish, each weighing from three to twenty-five pounds, are required for this enormous pack. The drain on nature's bounty has been so great that many rivers which were formerly known as salmon streams are no longer frequented by them, while in others, the yearly "run" has been growing less and less.

When this condition became apparent, the Bureau of Fisheries of the United States Government began the culture of salmon on the Pacific Coast. It now operates twenty-four hatcheries with branch stations in Alaska and the Pacific Coast States from which, in 1913, one hundred and forty-eight million young fish and forty million eggs were sent out. Oregon, Washington and California have established a number of hatcheries in addition to those under United States control. The work of salmon culture is gradually extended from year to year.

The culture of fish produces better results than nature. The egg-bearing fish are taken near spawning grounds, usually near the head waters of some river or tributary stream. They are there killed and opened and the eggs are extracted and fertilized with milt from the "buck" salmon. Thus few ripe eggs fail of fertilization, while in nature many would so fail. These eggs are spread in shallow trays or baskets and placed in troughs of running water. In the small, round, gelatine-like egg two black spots, the eyes, first appear. Later the head, body and tail can be distinguished and the little fish now wriggles its way out of the enclosing shell and falls through the meshes of the tray into the trough below, while the masses of unhatched eggs

still remain in the tray. At this time the young salmon is unable to feed itself and life is supported by a portion of the egg yolk which is still fastened to it. The young fish, now called "fry," are either sent to the different streams in which they are to be released, or kept in tanks and fed on chopped meat mixed with meal, to gain a greater growth with a better chance of survival against their enemies. In 1914, the output of baby salmon reached one hundred and eighty million.

Sooner or later the young fish find their way down to the sea where they live until they are full grown. This period varies from two to four years, according to the species. After they reach maturity, the spawning instinct sends them back to the fresh water of the headwaters of the rivers. They come in silver hordes, in the full vigor of life fighting their way up stream through rapids and over waterfalls and choking the very current with their numbers. They select quiet, shallow, sandy spots, make slight depressions in the river-bed and lay their eggs. When their mission is accomplished according to a law of their nature they pine away and die. From the time when the Pacific salmon enter a river to spawn they never eat. A few months after spawning has taken place they die.

Not much is known of the salmon's life between the time it leaves for the sea and its return. Most of this time is spent in salt water and there it attains its growth, returning only to spawn and die.

The Atlantic salmon, fewer in number, spawn more than once and live to a greater age.

The big runs are now in the Columbia and Fraser Rivers, and here are the largest of the canning factories. Astoria, at the mouth of the Columbia, has the greatest output of canned salmon. The fish are caught by various methods. By weirs, seines, and fish wheels the canneries are supplied with the year's catch of over one hundred million salmon.

Questions on Film

1. Describe operation of nets.
2. What is a purse net?
3. What impression did the hauling of the nets with the captured salmon make upon you?
4. Describe boats and crews as pictured on the screen.
5. How are the fish kept alive after capture?

General Questions, Topics, Suggestions

1. Tell how salmon spawn.
2. Describe forms of tins in which salmon are canned. Note difference in labels and in price. Name varieties of salmon.
3. Name and locate rivers famous for their salmon.
4. Describe different ways in which the salmon are caught.
5. Tell of the work of the Bureau of Fisheries of the United States Government.
6. Name and describe the various kinds of food fishes telling where they are caught.

References

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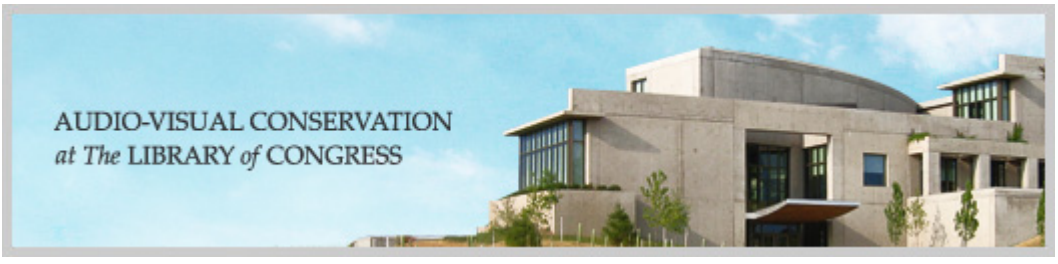

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